

20TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2012

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217
DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN





Todd McFarlane and Image Comics Present



PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

Following an act of violence that saw him gunned down on national television, fragments of Jim Downing's mysterious past are finally revealed. Each flash of memory is a puzzle piece hinting at the full scope of Jim's place within the complex mythology of the SPAWN universe, including his connection to Jason Wynn, Tremor, the Freak, Overtkill and the Program that made him Patient 47.

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PLEASE...
TAKE A STEP
BACK! WE CAN'T LET
YOU THROUGH. WHAT WE
NEED YOU TO DO IS GET
OVER TO THE AMBULANCE
AND LET THEM CHECK
YOU OUT.

I TOLD
YOU--
I'M FINE!
I JUST WANT
TO TALK TO
THE GUY.

WE CAN'T
LET YOU DO THAT!
HE'S GOING TO THE
SQUAD CAR AND
YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED
TO INTERACT WITH
THE SUSPECT.

SO WHY
DON'T YOU
JUST RELAX AND
LET THE DOCTORS
TAKE A LOOK
AT YOU?



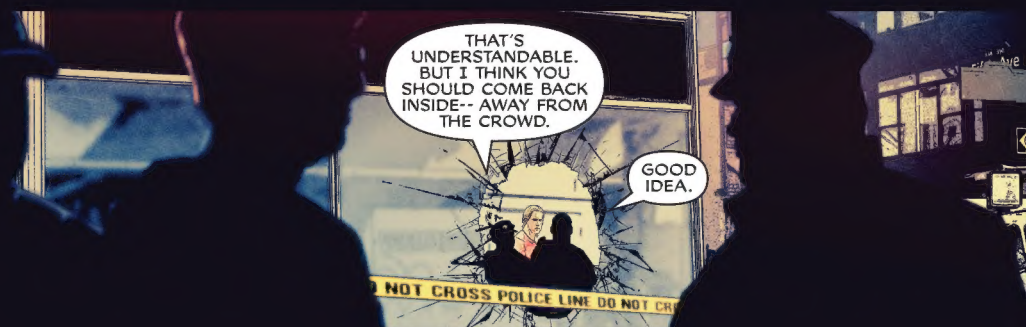
I DON'T
WANT A
DOCTOR!

LISTEN,
DOWNING-- YOU
WERE SHOT! WE ALL
SAW IT. I DON'T KNOW
HOW YOU'RE EVEN STANDING
BUT YOU NEED TO SIT DOWN
AND TAKE A DEEP BREATH,
UNTIL WE SORT THIS
OUT.

OKAY! FINE!
I'M DONE WITH
ALL THIS! DO
WHATEVER YOU
HAVE TO.

ICE

POLICE





MOMENTS LATER.









SLAMM



NICE
ENTRANCE--
VERY DRAMATIC
OF YOU.

AND
YOUR SENSE
OF TIMING IS
IMPECCABLE. I WAS
JUST FINISHING UP
MY TALK WITH YOUR
DOG FRIEND HERE.
HE WAS INTERESTED
IN KNOWING MY
THOUGHTS ON
THE TOPIC OF
'LOYALTY.'



BUT, AS YOU
CAN SEE-- IT WAS A
BIT OF A ONE-SIDED
CONVERSATION.



EXCUSE
ME! OUT OF
MY WAY...
PLEASE!

TWITCH!

WERE YOU
WATCHING? **DID
YOU SEE?!** THEY
SAID HE GOT SHOT
AND NOW HE'S
WALKING AROUND
LIKE...

NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT · PRECINCT 23

QUIET!

I SAW IT--
NOW LET ME
HEAR WHAT
THEY'RE
SAYING!

HE JUST
LAID THERE.
I COULDN'T TELL IF HE
WAS MOVING OR NOT.
THE CROWD AND THE
POLICE WERE BLOCKING
MY VIEW. BUT THEN...
I COULDN'T BELIEVE
MY EYES... HE JUST
GOT UP.

HE HAD
BLOOD ALL
OVER HIM AND
THEN THE POLICE
PUSHED US AWAY.
PEOPLE WERE
SCREAMING...

TWITCH.
WE NEED TO
GET DOWN
THERE!

NO.

I KNOW DOWNING--
HE'LL BE GONE BY THE
TIME WE GET THERE. WE'D
BE WASTING OUR TIME.
BESIDES, TRYING TO FIGURE
THIS MESS OUT IS GIVING
ME A HEADACHE.



C.I.A. HEAD-
QUARTERS



I HOPE YOU'VE
GOT YOUR BOYS ALL
OVER THIS DOWNING
FIASCO! WE NEED TO
CONTAIN THIS! EVERY
NEWS ORGANIZATION
IN THE WORLD'S
COVERING IT!

WE'RE
ON IT.

I BET IT
WAS ONE OF
OUR MIDDLE
EAST FRIENDS
TRYING TO
SCREW US.

WE
DON'T
THINK
SO.

...THERE WAS
A LOUD SOUND,
THEN THE PLATE GLASS
EXPLODED! I HEARD...
I THINK ABOUT
THREE SHOTS...

...I CAN'T BE
SURE WITH ALL THE
TRAFFIC NOISE BEHIND
US. BUT THE GUY WHO DID
IT WAS ONLY ABOUT TEN
FEET FROM US... WE DIDN'T
KNOW... THEN WE SAW HIS
GUN. THAT'S WHEN WE
TRIED TO GET OUT OF
THERE...



THEN FIND OUT
WHICH DIPLOMATIC
SLEAZEBALL **BETRAYED**
US! THIS COULD CRIPPLE
YOUR SET-UP WITH THAT
REPORTER-- THE ROSEN
KID. HE STILL HASN'T
GIVEN YOU HIS TRUST
YET, HAS HE?



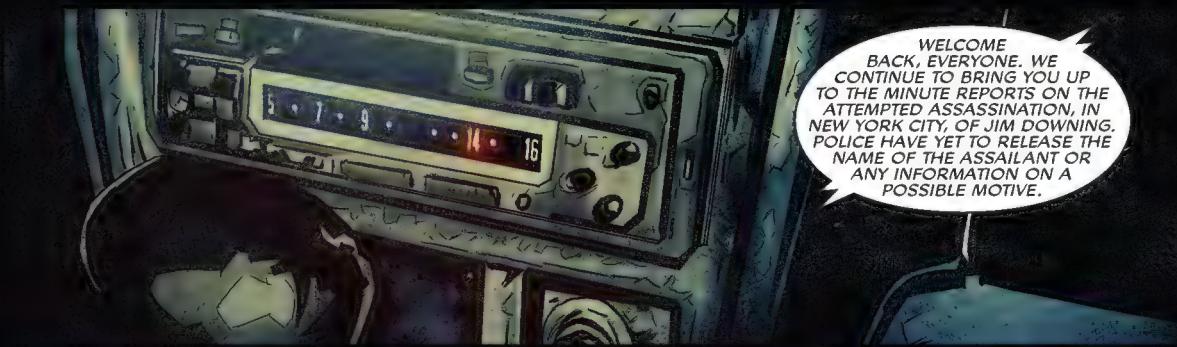
HE'S STILL
ON THE FENCE,
BUT HE'LL COME
AROUND.
STRANGELY... THIS
SHOOTING MIGHT BE
THE CATALYST
THAT HOOKS HIM
FOR US.



WE CAN CONSOLIDATE YOUR DEBT AND WORK WITH YOUR CREDITORS TO HELP CREATE A MONTHLY PAYMENT THAT IS MANAGEABLE-- SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?



CALL NOW AND ONE OF OUR REPRESENTATIVES WILL WALK YOU THROUGH OUR EASY THREE-STEP PROGRAM TO A MORE SECURE AND STRESS-FREE LIFE.



WELCOME BACK, EVERYONE. WE CONTINUE TO BRING YOU UP TO THE MINUTE REPORTS ON THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION, IN NEW YORK CITY, OF JIM DOWNING. POLICE HAVE YET TO RELEASE THE NAME OF THE ASSAILANT OR ANY INFORMATION ON A POSSIBLE MOTIVE.



IN A FEW MOMENTS WE'LL BRING IN TWO GUESTS THAT ARE FORMER INVESTIGATORS WITH THE N.Y.P.D.





WE DON'T HAVE THE STAFF TO COVER FOR YOU, SO I'M SORRY YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY FOR THE REST OF YOUR SHIFT.

I TOLD YOU I NEED TO LEAVE! AN EMERGENCY HAS COME UP!

I UNDERSTAND, BUT WE'RE SHORT TODAY, AND I CAN'T MAKE ANY EXCEPTIONS BECAUSE...

THEN I QUIT!

I DON'T NEED A JOB LIKE THIS! ALL YOUR DUMB RULES!! AND *THESE* HATS YOU MAKE US WEAR?! WE'RE NOT LIVING IN THE FIFTIES ANYMORE-- WHEN ARE YOU GUYS GOING WAKE UP?!



THE TARGET IS LEAVING THE BUILDING.

TELL THE VATICAN THAT OUR OPERATION WITH MISS JOHNSTON IS GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN.



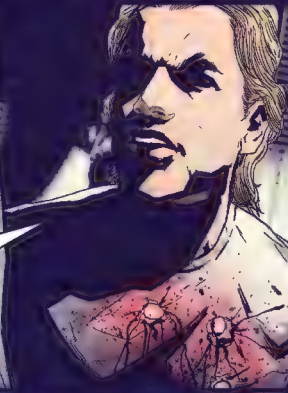
THIRTY-SIX YEARS I'VE BEEN AT THIS. THIRTY-SIX!



AND IN ALL THAT TIME I AIN'T EVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS.



BUT IF YOU INSIST YOU'RE NOT IN PAIN, I CAN'T KEEP YOU AGAINST YOUR WILL. YOU'RE FREE TO GO IF YOU WANT.

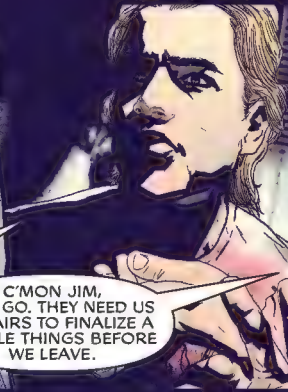


FINALLY! WE'RE IN AGREEMENT ON SOMETHING. I APPRECIATE YOU DOING YOUR JOB, BUT YOU CAN WRITE IN YOUR REPORT THAT YOU DID YOUR TESTS AND NOTHING WAS WRONG.



THAT'S WHAT'S GOT MY HEAD SPINNING. TWO DIRECT HITS TO YOUR CHEST AND HEART AREA, AND THE WORST I FIND IS A COUPLE WELTS.

IT DEFIES LOGIC.



YEAH?... WELL, WELCOME TO MY WORLD.

C'MON JIM, LET'S GO. THEY NEED US UPSTAIRS TO FINALIZE A COUPLE THINGS BEFORE WE LEAVE.





I... I'M SORRY...
I DIDN'T MEAN TO
INTERRUPT YOUR
CONVERSATION.

IT'S FINE. WE
WERE JUST FINISHING UP.
I'LL CALL YOU LATER,
TWITCH. I HAVE A COUPLE
OTHER IDEAS.

I'LL BE AT
THE
PRECINCT.



YOU'RE
SURE
YOU'RE
OKAY?

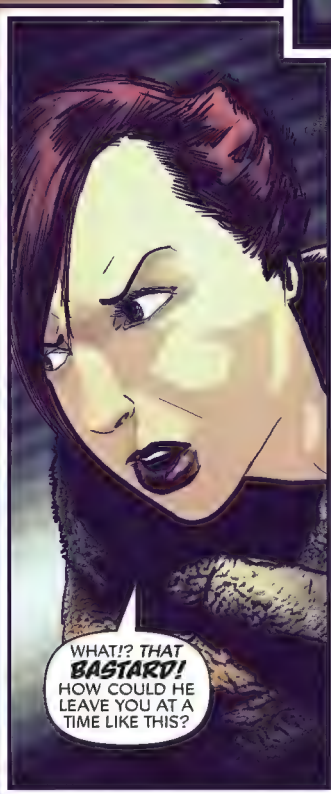


I THINK SO.
THE MEDICS
AREN'T SAYING
OTHERWISE.

EVERYONE'S
TALKING ABOUT YOU!
YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T
YOU? ALL THE NEWS CHANNELS.
THE INTERNET. *EVERYONE*. IT'S
NOT JUST YOUR HEALING--
NOW THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT
YOUR 'RESURRECTION.'
THEY THINK YOU'RE...
A *GOD*.

MARC
SHOULD
HAVE TOLD
YOU.

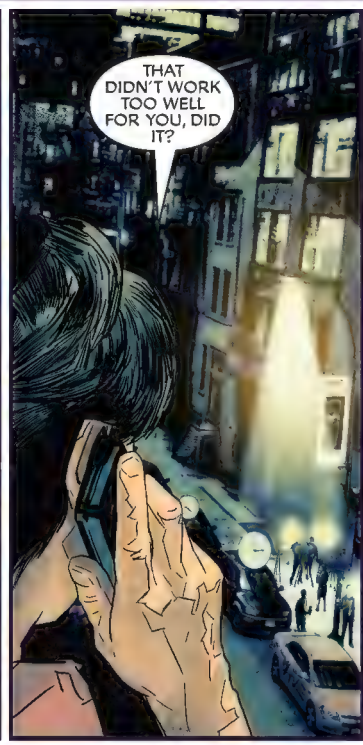
HE
PROBABLY
TRIED, BUT
HE WENT TO
THE ROOF
TO MAKE A
CALL.



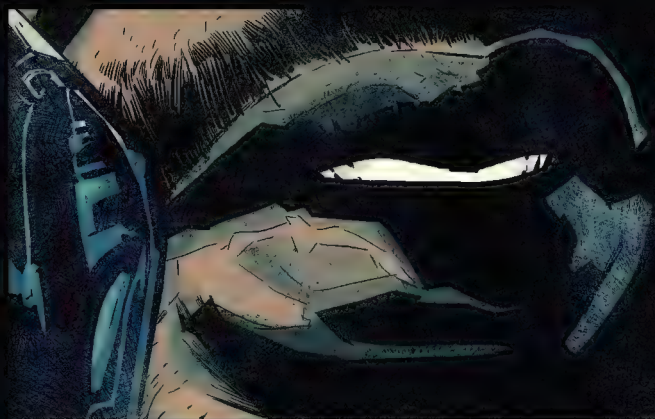
WHAT!? THAT
BASTARD!
HOW COULD HE
LEAVE YOU AT A
TIME LIKE THIS?



I JUST WANT
TO KNOW-- WHY
DIDN'T YOU STOP THIS?
YOU SAID YOU COULD
PROTECT US.



THAT
DIDN'T WORK
TOO WELL
FOR YOU, DID
IT?



THE SHOOTER... HE WASN'T A PART OF THIS. HE'S A ROGUE. NO ONE KNOWS WHO HE IS, BUT I'VE GOT HALF A DOZEN PEOPLE ON IT. I'LL GET YOU SOME ANSWERS SOON. IN THE MEANTIME, YOU NEED TO TAKE JIM HOME WITH YOU AND STAY THERE. MY PEOPLE WILL FOLLOW YOU TO MAKE SURE NO ONE HASSLES YOU.

THAT INCLUDES THE MEDIA AND THE AUTHORITIES. WE'LL MAKE SURE ANYONE WHO NEEDS TO GET TO YOU HAS BEEN FULLY CHECKED OUT. CHAOTIC SHIT LIKE THIS MAKES PEOPLE TAKE THEIR EYES OFF THE REAL GAME.



ALL RIGHT, BUT THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE.



I CAN'T LOSE YOU.

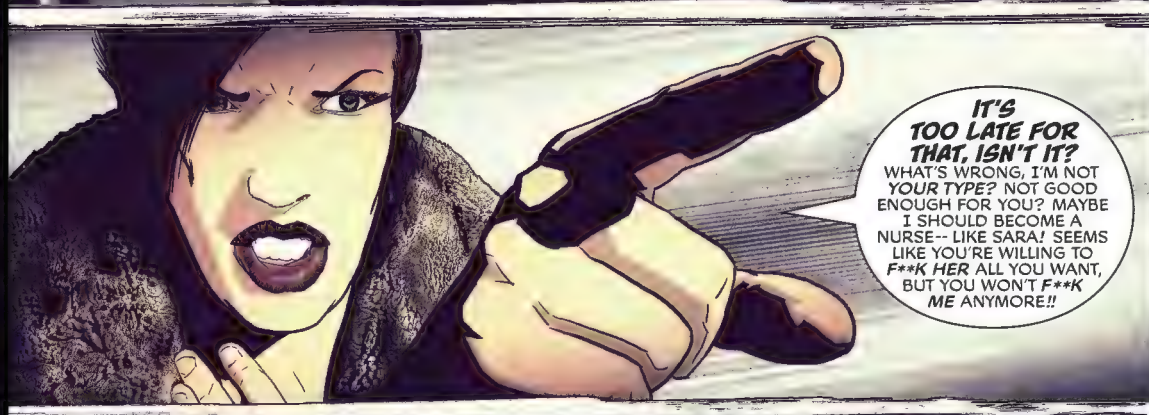
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

I... NEED... YOU.



NO!

WE'RE NOT GOING TO DO THIS! I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU THAT... I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN AND LETTING ME STAY WITH YOU AND MARC, BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BETRAY THAT FRIENDSHIP.



IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, ISN'T IT?

WHAT'S WRONG, I'M NOT YOUR TYPE? NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU? MAYBE I SHOULD BECOME A NURSE-- LIKE SARA! SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE WILLING TO F**K HER ALL YOU WANT, BUT YOU WON'T F**K ME ANYMORE!!



WHOA...!
EASY NOW!

THIS HAS
NOTHING TO DO
WITH SARA. I'M
JUST NOT READY
TO...

BULLSHIT!
THIS HAS EVERY-
THING TO DO WITH
HER! YOU'RE JUST
THE LAST ONE TO
REALIZE IT!

BUT THIS
ISN'T
OVER!



NOT BY
A LONG
SHOT!



GUESS I
MIGHT AS
WELL SEE WHAT
OTHERS ARE
SAYING...

...AN OFFICIAL
STATEMENT FROM
THE VATICAN IS CALLING
FOR CAUTION IN LIGHT
OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING
MR. DOWNING. THE
RELEASE STATES:

"WHILE
THE WORLD HAS
BORNE WITNESS TO
THE MIRACLES PERFORMED
BY AN INDIVIDUAL OF
PARTICULAR INTEREST, WE
MUST BE SURE TO ASCERTAIN
THE VALIDITY OF THESE ACTS
BEFORE OUR GRANDEST
HOPES CAN BE
PROVEN TRUE."



BY ALL ACCOUNTS-- FROM EYEWITNESSES, TO THE DETAILS PROVIDED BY THE MEDICAL STAFF WHO EXAMINED MR. DOWNING ON-SCENE AND THE ARRESTING OFFICERS WHO APPREHENDED THE ATTACKER-- THIS WAS NO HOAX. MR. DOWNING WAS INDEED SHOT WITH LIVE ROUNDS. AND HIS WOUNDS APPEARED TO BE VERY REAL BEFORE HIS 'MIRACULOUS' RECOVERY.

THIS EVENT-- THE ATTACK ON HIS LIFE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, MR. DOWNING'S SUBSEQUENT RECOVERY-- HAS ONLY SERVED TO FURTHER IGNITE A FIRESTORM OF MEDIA AND PUBLIC INTEREST WHICH WAS ALREADY SURGING AS A RESULT OF HIS OTHER RECENT ACTIVITIES.



THE MYSTERIOUS JIM DOWNING HAS DONE IT AGAIN, FOLKS. FIRST HE COMES OUT OF NOWHERE WITH A STORY SO INTRIGUING WE COULDN'T LOOK AWAY-- A COMA PATIENT WAKES WITH NO MEMORY AND NO ONE WHO REMEMBERS HIM, THEN STRUTS AROUND TOWN WITH THE POWERS OF A HEALING ANGEL AND THE DISHEVELED GOOD LOOKS OF AN UNDERWEAR MODEL.

NOW, JUST AS HE PROMISED TO USE HIS GIFTS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL MANKIND, A HORRIFIC BURST OF VIOLENT AGGRESSION STRIKES HIM DOWN. WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN A TRAGEDY, THOUGH, INSTEAD BECAME AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR NEW-FOUND HERO TO INSPIRE HOPE IN US ALL *ONCE AGAIN!*

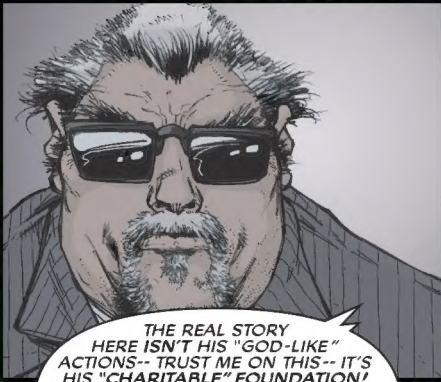
WE ARE WITNESSING A *MIRACLE*, PEOPLE. I HOPE YOU'RE ENJOYING IT WHILE YOU CAN-- I KNOW I AM-- BECAUSE WE MAY NEVER SEE SOMETHING LIKE HIM AGAIN IN OUR LIFETIMES. HIS PRESENCE HAS GRIPPED, NOT ONLY US HERE IN AMERICA, BUT THE ENTIRE WORLD TOO. THE WAVE OF "JIM-SANITY" IS WASHING OVER ALL OF US.



VIOLENCE FOLLOWS THIS MAN EVERYWHERE HE GOES. *WHY IS THAT?* IS HE JUST AN INNOCENT VICTIM-- A LOST SOUL WITH INCREDIBLE GIFTS HOUNDED BY THE MEDIA AND IMPOSSIBLE EXPECTATIONS? OR... IS HE HIS OWN WORST ENEMY? FLAUNTING HIS GOOD LOOKS. PLAYING CAT AND MOUSE WITH THE PRESS-- ONE DAY HE'S TRYING TO AVOID OUR RIGHTS AS **JOURNALISTS** TO KNOW AND REPORT **THE TRUTH**. THE NEXT HE'S HOLDING PRESS CONFERENCES... **DESPERATELY** SEEKING OUR ATTENTION-- THE WORLD'S ATTENTION-- FOR WHATEVER HIS NEXT GOAL MAY BE.

AND TODAY, WHAT DID WE GET? **ANOTHER** TELEVISED MIRACLE? **ANOTHER** SHOW FOR OUR EYES AND SENSES? *I DOUBT IT!* MR. DOWNING'S "MAGIC" POWERS ARE, IF YOU ASK *ME*, MORE LIKE THE "MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN" FROM WIZARD OF OZ-- **ALL HYPE AND NO SUBSTANCE--** A **DOG AND PONY SHOW** PULLING THE WOOL OVER THE LAME STREAM MEDIA'S EYES WITH FLASH AND **SHOCK** VALUE. BUT NOT *MINE*. *I'M* TELLING YOU *I* SEE THROUGH THIS GUY AND HIS MANIPULATIONS.

I'M NOT BUYING IT!



THE REAL STORY
HERE ISN'T HIS "GOD-LIKE"
ACTIONS-- TRUST ME ON THIS-- IT'S
HIS "CHARITABLE" FOUNDATION!
WHO'S SUPPLYING THE FUNDING FOR
THAT SHAM? DOWNING DIDN'T START
IT FOR FREE, SO **WHERE'D HE GET
THE CASH?** WHO'S PULLING HIS
STRINGS? THAT'S THE **REAL**
QUESTION.

THUDD

Unh...?

CLOWN--
WHAT THE
HELL?

IT'S
HAPPENING.

JUST
LIKE I SAID...
≥huff≤...



WHAT'RE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT? WHAT'S
HAPPENING?!

**HIS
RETRIBUTION--**
IT'S BEGUN--
SOONER THAN I'D
THOUGHT! I TRIED
TO ESCAPE... ♪ huff ♪...
BUT HE FOLLOWED
ME.

EVEN
IN THE
SHADOWS
I...
COULDN'T
LOSE
HIM!



LOSE
WHO?

MALEBOLGIA!

HE
FOLLOWED
ME! BUT
WE'RE--
**NOT
READY!**

IT'S TOO
SOON... IT'S
WAY... TOO...
SOON.



LOOK, I
DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S GOING
ON WITH YOU, BUT
YOU NEED TO
RELAX-- NO ONE'S
HERE. IT'S JUST
YOU AND I.

SADLY,
DOWNING...

THAT
ISN'T
TRUE!

NEXT ISSUE:
**MY
MAKER...
MY
MASTER!**





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE